

LARYNGEAL REGISTRATION EXERCISES: YODEL/SWITCH

Do you have control of your registration? Can you enter chest in a dynamic of your choice? Or are you going "splat!" in there? Are you avoiding the issue all together by staying in head voice which sounds weak compared to the rest of the phrase no matter how hard you try?

There are two laryngeal registers - most people call them chest voice and head voice. The geeks among us use the terms thyroarytenoid dominance and cricothyroid dominance.

Blending of the registers means being able to move smoothly between the two biological registers, NOT creating a third one. You cannot blend two things if you don't know what they are! So let's take some more steps to clarify them. Don't be so afraid! Nobody will die if we can hear the transition! Call it the speaking register if chest scares you. It is as good a description as any. Trick is not to associate chest voice only with singing loudly.

**The goal is calm, unpressed chest voice
in medium to soft dynamic.**

Exercises that clarify the laryngeal registration switches are a good way to define the two things you are "mixing" on a day to day basis. Our **Come YODEL with me!** and **Come SWITCH with me!** exercises have the same purpose as the classic ones like Viardot: to exercise chest voice up to F4, while also training head voice down to C4. Viardot (like all the bel canto instructors) is clear that F4 is the laryngeal passaggio - this was not a question of opinion. Nor was it proclaimed that "all voices are different". Yes, they are, but there is not a technique for each voice!

As we have seen elsewhere the old treatises do not distinguish between male and female voices when it comes to the F4 laryngeal passaggio. The human voice moves from chest to head dominance naturally in the vicinity of this pitch and bel canto training teaches the professional singer to achieve this smoothly and elegantly.

Sopranos and mezzos have to traverse this pivot point ALL THE TIME, and the old divas did so masterfully. While tenors and baritones/basses in the modern world sing in chest dominant production only, laryngeal registration exercises ("flipping between chest and falsetto") builds dynamic possibilities below, through, and above the passaggio - remember that dynamics are a result of registration. To clarify: to sing louder, a singer adds 'threads' of chest to the mix of any note - whether it is chest dominant or not. To sing softer, a signer adds 'threads' of head to the mix of any note - whether head-dominant or not.